



Memorandum

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To: City of Sugar Land
Riverstone Connection Study Strategic Team

From: Manu Isaac, P.E.
Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

Date: 3/18/13

Subject: Riverstone Connection Study - Task Force Meeting #3
Meeting Summary

Meeting Purpose

The first task force meeting for the Riverstone Connection Study on December 20, 2012 identified the neighborhood goals and interests. The second task force meeting on January 29, 2013 shared the options developed by the Consultant and obtained feedback from the Task Force members. The last and final meeting in this series called Task Force Meeting #3 was held on February 27, 2013, at Sugar Land City Hall. This meeting presented a comprehensive summary of the Riverstone Connection Study to date and presented three final Connection Options for consideration. At end of meeting, a decision from task force members about a preferred connection option as well as an alternate was requested.

Attendees:

Task Force Members:

1. Debby Coffman – Lakes of Austin Park
2. Leslye Henderson – Austin Park
3. Doug Earle – First Colony Community Assoc. (FCCA)
4. Dave Kinzelman – Commonwealth
5. Virginia Mack – Commonwealth
6. John Niemand – Sweetwater
7. Michael Pawlowski – Colony Woods
8. Tom Wilcox – Riverstone
9. Lorraine Graessle – Travis Park
10. Rick Pal – Avalon

City of Sugar Land Elected Official:

1. Harish Jajoo, P.E., CFM – City Council Member - District 4

City of Sugar Land Staff Members:

1. Chris Steubing, P.E. – City Engineer (Project Manager)



2. Pat Walsh, P.E. - Director of Transportation & Long-Range Planning
3. David Worley, P.E., CFM – Assistant Director of Public Works
4. Andrew Yee – Engineer I
5. Lisa Kocich-Meyer, AICP – Principal Planner
6. Doug Schomburg, AICP – Director Planning & Environmental Services
7. Cathy Halka, AICP – Senior Planner

Consultant Team:

1. Manu Isaac, P.E. – Consultant Project Manager
2. Kurt Schulte, AICP – Planner
3. Ryan Eurek, EIT

Meeting Summary:

The City's Project Manager provided a summary of the project discussions thus far and thanked the active participation of task force members. The Consultant team began the powerpoint presentation with an overview of Task Force Meetings #1 and #2 and shared results from the survey completed during the previous meeting.

This last and final meeting focused on conveying the following:

1. Advantages and Disadvantages of the shortlisted Connection Options still under consideration (#2 and #3) based on task force survey
2. Provide details about an alternate Connection Option (#8) which is located in between the two shortlisted options
3. Various Intersection and Roadway Treatments
4. Decision/Recommendations regarding the Riverstone Connection

The presentation helped facilitate a discussion among Task Force members about the advantages and disadvantages of the final three options presented at this meeting. Throughout the presentation and periodic open-forum discussion, both the City and Consultant obtained feedback from Task Force members.

Schematic intersection layouts and simulation videos allowed Task Force members to visualize different intersection configurations and future traffic operations with projected volumes. These visual aids provided a graphical representation of the mitigation strategies that could be implemented to reduce noise due to roadway traffic, prevent stray headlights from vehicles, and improve aesthetics at the connection location.

At the end of the meeting, a questionnaire was completed by Task Force members to provide a final ranking of the three shortlisted Connection Options.

Connection Options:

The three Connection Options included in the survey questionnaire stemmed from the information gathered during Task Force Meetings #1 and #2.

Three Options for Final Consideration

1. **Option #2** provides a connection approximately 1,000 feet south of Austin Parkway, near the Austin Park subdivision. The impact to neighborhood streets is minimal. It has some drainage implications and crosses the Centerpoint ROW diagonally which is not preferable.
2. **Option #3** provides a connection approximately 600 feet north of Palm Royale, near the Travis Park subdivision. The impact to neighborhood streets is minimal.
3. **Option #8** provides a connection approximately 800 feet north of Palm Royale in between Austin Park and Travis Park subdivisions. The impact to neighborhood streets is minimal. Connection is along existing Steep Bank Creek; so this option has drainage/environmental impacts.

Meeting Discussion:

1. The design elements shown in the schematic intersection layouts can be utilized at any of the connection locations under consideration. This includes, but is not limited to: various roundabout intersection designs, improved aesthetics, noise screens, and additional landscaping.
2. Some Task Force members stated their communities desire to have a two-lane roundabout constructed at the onset itself to reduce possible construction impacts in the future. The Consultant explained that additional improvements required to convert the roundabout from one-lane to two-lane are not extensive and can be done without much effect on existing traffic and minimal impact to residents.
3. While a two-lane roundabout may be desirable for the projected 2035 traffic volumes, a single-lane roundabout would be sufficient for the short term. The City prefers the phased approach as model projections may often be different from actual development of traffic patterns and volumes over time especially 20 years in the future.
4. The Task Force members enquired why sidewalks are shown in the intersection schematics towards the east and along the east side of Commonwealth. City staff stated that the Hike and Bike Plan shows future shared use paths along Commonwealth and towards the east side and hence it would be required for the future.
5. Since two of the Connection Options would intersect Commonwealth Boulevard directly behind some subdivision lots, there was concern about the sentiments of these property owners. There was a general consensus that it is preferable to locate the Riverstone Connection intersection further away from subdivision homes.
6. Since the presentation alluded to opinions of relative cost, the Task Force enquired about the specifics of these cost estimates for the various options. Study Team indicated that detailed cost estimation is not feasible during initial planning stages and only broad opinions associated with relative cost estimation are provided. There are several unknown

factors that could have significant impacts to cost and feasibility such as CenterPoint Energy, drainage and levees. City indicated that all reasonable costs for construction of this connection would be borne by the Riverstone Development per the agreement.

7. It was stated that the noise generated by vehicles traversing a roundabout would be less than that of a regular intersection and possibly even a straight segment of roadway, due to lower speeds. The incidence of “drag racing”, a concern expressed by few, would also reduce upon installation of a roundabout. Roundabouts typically provide lower speeds, less noise, improved safety, and better traffic operations than other intersection treatments for similar situations.
8. Further sag calculations by CenterPoint Energy to verify vertical clearance and/or other unforeseen drainage implications have the potential to reduce the feasibility of any specific Connection Option.
9. The City and Consultant team will gather additional information from the US Army Corps of Engineers, if required; to determine any drainage and environmental implications and identify whether any permits are required to build a road over Steep Bank Creek.
10. Task Force members requested that the study report be comprehensive in documenting the Task Force discussions during meetings, as well as the analysis of the Study Team, so that in the future, one can recognize the extensive process by which these study recommendations were made.

General Feedback from Task Force members:

1. Based on the survey questionnaire provided towards the end of presentation, majority of task force members in attendance considered Option #8 as more preferable, followed by Option #3. Survey responses were tabulated and scored based on 4 relevant items for consideration in the selection of a Connection Option. Option #8 had the highest score of 4.11 out of 5.0, and Option #3 came in second with a score of 3.48.

Task Force Meeting #3 Recommendations:

1. Single-lane roundabout was accepted as the preferred intersection configuration by the Task Force members and City. A two-lane roundabout should be considered only if future traffic demand dictates the need for additional capacity.
2. Task Force members requested appropriate landscaping and enhanced roadway treatments at the proposed intersection to enhance study area.
3. Option #8 was selected as the preferred Riverstone Connection based on survey results, followed by Option #3.